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A

# SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL OF

MRS. REBECCA M. FARRINGTON,

LATE CONSORT OF

DANIEL FARRINGTON, A. B.

WHO LIVED THIS LIFE,

IN THE

BY NATHANIEL EMMONS, D. D.  
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN FRANKLIN.

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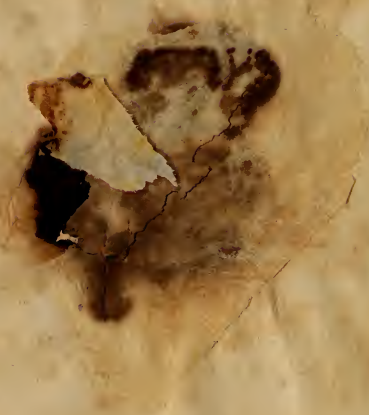
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## FUNERAL SERMON.

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PSALM XVII. 15.

*As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness : I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.*

**G**OD gives men their choice in the present state, whether they will have their portion in this life, or in the life to come. The most of men are universally disposed to choose their portion in this life, and God generally gratifies them by giving them a large share of earthly enjoyments; but all good men choose to have their portion in another and better world than this. David was a good man. He loved God supremely, and preferred the future and everlasting enjoyment of him, to all the momentary and unsatisfying enjoyments of the present life. He looked beyond the grave for his full and unfailing portion. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness : I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." He expected, that as soon as he should be absent from the body, he should be present with the Lord, where he should see him face to face, and be completely blessed in his favour and presence forever. And if his expectation was just, we may safely conclude,

That saints will be perfectly happy in the presence of God in heaven.

To illustrate this consoling truth, I shall attempt to show, that there is such a place as heaven; that God manifests his peculiar presence there; and that saints will there be completely happy in his presence.

I. I am to show, that there is such a place as heaven.

Some seem to imagine, that heaven is a state, rather than a place; but it is not easy to conceive of this distinction. The idea of locality attends all our ideas of created objects, whether spiritual or corporeal. If we think of any created spirit but our own, we conceive of it as at a distance from us, and existing in some place peculiar to itself. The idea of place certainly accompanies our idea of angels. We conceive them to be in heaven, or some other place, where God is pleased to employ them. And with respect to heaven, no person, perhaps, ever did really conceive of it under any other idea, than that of place. The scripture itself speaks of coming down from heaven, and of going up to heaven; and these expressions, in many places, admit of a figurative meaning. We know that Elijah and Christ were both seen to ascend from earth towards heaven, and to continue ascending higher and higher, until they rose above the utmost stretch of human sight. And of Christ it was expressly said by the angels, that he should so come in like manner as he was seen to go up to heaven. Besides, the scripture not only represents heaven as a place, but describes it as the most magnificent place in the universe, and such we should naturally suppose would be the palace of the supreme Lord of all. The scripture also assures us, that the bodies of Elijah and Christ, and of those who come out of their graves at his resurrection, are now actually in heaven. But bodies can exist only in place; and since we know, that there are bodies in heaven, we are constrained to view it as a place, rather than a state. Whatever changes may

have passed upon glorified bodies they must still be material, and have a local existence. Agreeably to this, our Lord told his disciples, when about to leave them, and go to heaven, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a *place* for you. And if I go and prepare a *place* for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that *where* I am, *there* ye may be also." This plain and positive promise of Christ ought to convince us, that heaven is a place.

II. I now proceed to show, that God manifests his peculiar presence in heaven. David confidently expected to behold the *face* of God, in some peculiar manner, when he should awake in the world of light. Although God does, in some incomprehensible manner, fill heaven, earth and hell, by his essential presence; yet it may be true that he makes some peculiar manifestations of his local presence in the *earth* and *heaven*. We know, that he has appeared to be in a peculiar manner present, at certain times, in certain places. He was visibly present, when he lead his people out of Egypt into the wilderness, by a pillar of cloud and of fire. He was visibly present in the tabernacle and in the temple. He made the Holy of holies his constant residence. In some such peculiar manner, we may suppose he manifests his presence in heaven. Nor is this a groundless conjecture; for the scripture represents him, as making heaven his high and holy habitation. Those holy men, who were indulged the favour of looking within the veil, have told us, that they saw his Throne, where he makes visible and glorious manifestations of his presence. Isaiah says, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims; each one had six wings; with

twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet; and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." The apostle John also gives a similar representation of the throne of God, and of those who surround it. If these representations are somewhat figurative; yet these figures must have some foundation in fact. But they would be groundless and absurd, if there were no visible manifestations of God's peculiar presence in heaven. In some part of that glorious place, we may suppose, God has fixed his throne, his Shechinah, or visible symbol of his presence, which all the inhabitants of heaven view as the residence of the Supreme Sovereign of the universe; and near this holy habitation of the Deity, we may likewise suppose, the Man Christ Jesus, and the highest orders of celestial beings fill their appropriate places. Indeed, the whole current of scripture leads us to believe, that God dwells more visibly and gloriously in heaven, than in any part of the universe, and that both saints and angels behold his face in righteousness, and enjoy his blissful presence. This leads me to show,

III. That when the saints shall arrive in heaven, they will be completely satisfied and happy there.

They will enjoy all that felicity, which David anticipated, when he humbly and confidently said to God, "I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." If there will be perfect happiness any where in the universe, it is to be expected in heaven, where God is, and Christ is, and all holy beings are collected and united in their views and affections. Heaven was designed for happiness, and great preparations have been made, and are still making, to raise the blessedness of holy creatures to the highest degree of perfection. "Eye hath not

seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath *prepared* for them that love him." And Christ tells us, that he will say to them on his right hand at the last day, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom *prepared* for you, from the foundation of the world." Since God intends to prepare heaven for the enjoyment and blessedness of his friends, we may be assured, that it will be fitted in the best manner to answer that benevolent and gracious purpose. The place itself, and all the objects contained in it, will be completely suited to afford the most perfect satisfaction and enjoyment to all who shall possess it. There will be no disagreeable objects in heaven. There will be nothing offensive to the eye, or to the ear, or to the heart. There will be no painful heat, nor painful cold, nor painful darkness, nor painful hunger, nor painful thirst, nor painful fear. Nor will God merely exclude every thing unamiable, and undesirable from heaven, but adorn it with every natural and moral beauty. Such is the place, which God has *prepared*, and is still preparing, for them that love him. Let us now more distinctly consider the various species of happiness, which they shall there enjoy, and which shall yield them complete satisfaction.

1. They will enjoy all the happiness, which can flow from the free and full exercise of all their intellectual powers and faculties. All rational beings have a thirst for knowledge, and the discovery of truth affords real entertainment and satisfaction to their minds. Many good men in this world have delightfully employed their mental powers in their inquisitive researches into the works and ways of God. There is a peculiar pleasure in tracing and examining the natures, causes, relations, and connexions of things in the natural and moral world. In heaven, the understanding will be cleared of its dark-

ness, weakness, and liability to err, while all the natural faculties of the mind will be strengthened and enlarged. The memory will contain, and be able to recollect, all ideas which had ever been treasured up in it. All objects and truths, which had been once known, will be forever known. And this will afford a great facility in making rapid and perpetual advances in knowledge. Besides, heaven will furnish the blessed with the best means of intellectual improvement. They will enjoy ample opportunities, in the course of ages, to become acquainted with all created objects, with all past events, and all the causes by which they were brought about. For, Christ has promised his friends, that the things which they know not now, they shall know hereafter. If the godly are greatly gratified with the little knowledge they gain of what passes in this world, while they remain in it; how much greater satisfaction will it give them, to become acquainted with all that God has done, and will do, from the beginning to the end of time.

2. Those who shall behold the face of God in righteousness, will enjoy the pleasures of the heart, as well as those of the understanding. They will view objects and truths, without that coldness and indifference, with which they viewed them in this dark and imperfect state. Their new, clear, and increasing discoveries of the power, the wisdom, the goodness, the justice, the mercy, and the sovereignty of God, will fill their hearts with raptures of delight. The pleasures of the heart are the highest and most refined pleasures of the soul. When love, joy, gratitude, and admiration fill the mind, they completely satisfy it, because they gratify all its powers and capacity at once, and leave no painful void. Those pleasures of the heart will naturally and constantly flow from the beatific vision of God in the kingdom of glory.



3. The saints in that blessed world, shall enjoy the pleasures of the heart in the richest variety. As they will behold the face of God in righteousness, so they will be peculiarly gratified by the holy and delightful services, in which they will be frequently employed. They will raise their admiring eyes to the throne of divine glory, and unitedly celebrate the praises of their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. In these acts of pure devotion, their hearts will be full of the most lively, ardent, and grateful affections. The pen of inspiration has painted, in glowing colours, the pure and elevated worship of the heavenly hosts. They are represented as casting their crowns at the feet of God and the Lamb, and paying them divine homage with the sincerest and warmest emotions of heart. The apostle John says, "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation to our God, which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, amen: blessing, and glory and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen." This is one description of the worship of the heavenly inhabitants, and there are others equally beautiful and glorious. It is not possible to describe, nor even to conceive, with what holy fervour and delight, the redeemed from among men will adore and praise him, who washed them from their sins in his own blood, and made them kings and priests unto God.

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Again they will enjoy the pleasure of society, as well as of devotion. As rational and benevolent creatures, they will be formed for the enjoyment of social intercourse. Society is the balm of life in this world. Should any one here be entirely secluded from all human society, he would be in a very disagreeable and wretched condition. But in heaven, the pleasures of society will be universally and most perfectly enjoyed. When Peter, James and John, heard Christ, Moses and Elias freely converse on the mount of transfiguration about the glorious work of redemption, they were thrown into an extacy of joy. But how much more pleasing and permanent satisfaction will the redeemed derive from the holy conversation of all the heavenly inhabitants. Adam the father of mankind will be there, who will have much to say concerning the creation of the world, the happiness of Eden, the astonishing effects of his apostacy, and the still more astonishing displays of divine grace towards him and his ruined family. Noah will be there, who will have much to say concerning the degeneracy of mankind, the awful destruction brought upon them by the deluge, and what he saw, and heard, and experienced, during that tremendous catastrophe. Abraham will be there, who will have much to say concerning the dark times in which he lived, and the dark scenes and fiery trials which he endured. Paul will be there, who will have much to say concerning his duties, his dangers, and his triumphs, while pulling down the kingdom of darkness, and building up the kingdom of Christ. All the redeemed will have much to say concerning the discriminating grace of God, in calling them out of darkness into light, and in preparing them to behold the face of God, in the beauties of holiness. Angels will be there, who saw the creation of the world, who were ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, and who saw

their once holy and happy associates rebel against their Maker, forfeit their seats in heaven, and receive the due reward of their deeds; and these pure spirits will have much to say concerning what they saw in heaven, in earth, and the regions of despair. Above all, Christ will be there, and converse as freely, and far more instructively, than he ever did in the days of his humanity. He will be able and disposed to relate what passed in the divine council, when the gracious design of redemption was devised, and all the steps that had been taken to carry it into execution. In a word, he will clearly unfold whatever was dark and mysterious in all the dispensations of providence and grace, from the beginning to the end of time. The free, mutual, and unreserved intercourse in such a holy society, will fill the hearts of the heirs of glory, with unspeakable satisfaction and delight.

In addition to the happiness of this general intercourse, they will enjoy the peculiar pleasures of a more particular and intimate friendship. Though there will be no enemies in heaven, yet there will undoubtedly be circles of intimate friends, whose hearts, like David's and Jonathan's, were united in tender affections before they arrived to the mansions of heaven. Pious rulers and pious subjects, pious ministers and pious hearers, pious friends and pious acquaintance, will meet and know one another amidst the general assembly and church of the first-born; and their former union and communion in the church below, will lay a foundation for a far more intimate and endearing friendship in the church above. Paul expected, that the brotherly love, which united his heart with the hearts of those, whom he had been instrumental of bringing to the saving knowledge of the truth, would continue and increase, and become an inexhaustable source of the purest friendship. We may well

suppose that those, who were the most intimately connected in this world, will often meet together in more private circles, and delightfully communicate to each other, the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, they experienced while passing through the storms and tempests of this present probationary state. Christ was more intimate with Peter, James and John, than with the rest of his disciples, and still more intimate with John than with Peter and James. The love of Christ, which cements the hearts of christians in this life, will continue to cement their hearts in the life to come, and produce a refined and sweet enjoyment, peculiar to themselves.

Still further to enhance their blessedness, they will enjoy the ineffable pleasure, flowing from the expressions of the peculiar love and approbation of God. When they behold his face in righteousness, he will lift upon them the light of his countenance, and speak peace to their ravished hearts. We know not, indeed, in what mode he will express his love to them; but he who could converse with Moses here on earth, face to face, as a man converseth with his friend, can easily employ means to convey to their minds the clearest evidence of his paternal complacency and delight in them, which will fill their souls with joys unspeakable and full of glory.

But that which will carry celestial blessedness to the highest degree of perfection, is the pleasure of anticipation. This is the principal source of divine comfort in the present state, but it will afford a far more permanent satisfaction to the blessed in their future and eternal state. They will be able to look forward to interminable ages, and anticipate not only the continuance, but the increase of holiness and happiness, as long as duration shall last. As David anticipated the joyful prospect of appearing before God, and beholding his

face in righteousness, so all the redeemed will joyfully anticipate their perpetual felicity and rising glory to all eternity. In the presence of God there will be fulness of joy, and at his right hand there will be pleasures forevermore.

It now remains to improve and apply the subject.

1. Since we have reason to believe, that heaven is a real place, we have no reason to believe, that those departed spirits, who have arrived there, have any personal knowledge of what passes in this world. Some suppose, that deceased saints are still conversant with the living, and have a personal knowledge of what passes among men. This opinion they found upon the supposition that heaven is merely a state, and not a proper place distinct and distant from this world. But if what has been said be true, there is no ground for this supposition. The scripture certainly represents heaven and earth as very different and remote from each other; and plainly intimates, that the dead are as ignorant of the state of the living, as the living are of the state of the dead. Whatever it is, that prevents living saints from looking into heaven, must undoubtedly prevent departed saints from looking back into this world. Job had no idea, that a departed parent would have any knowledge of the state and circumstances of his children, whom he left behind. He says to God, "Thou destroyest the hope of man. Thou prevailest against him; and he *passeth*: thou changest his countenance, and *sendest him away*. His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he *perceiveth it not of them*." Isaiah represents the church as saying to God, "Doubtless thou art our Father, though *Abraham be ignorant of us*, and Israel *acknowledge us not*." The notion, that departed saints are acquainted with the concerns of this world, seems to have been on occasion, at least, of the

popish practice of praying to, and worshipping canonized saints. And though protestants have not run into the same superstition and idolatry, yet the opinion, that departed spirits know what passes among the living and happens to them in this life, tends to turn men aside from the path of duty, and fill their minds with groundless hopes and fears.

2. If heaven be such a place as has been described, then it is easy to conceive of one way, at least, in which God can reward saints according to their works, when they arrive there. He may do it by *local* situation. If he has fixed his throne in the midst of heaven, if he has seated his Son at his right hand, and if he has arranged all the heavenly inhabitants in proper order, then he may place some saints in mansions nearer to, and some in mansions further off, from the throne of his glory and the personal presence of the divine Redeemer. To be near to God and to Christ, will be a peculiar mark of the divine favour. We cannot suppose, that the immensely numerous inhabitants of heaven are a mixed multitude, promiscuously blended together, without any order or appointed residence. As there are many mansions in heaven, so we may naturally conclude, that individual saints and angels will know their own appropriate mansions. When saints arrive in heaven, they are, without doubt, severally conducted to the mansions, which Christ has gone before to prepare for them. And those, who have acted a better part on the stage of life, and done more good in the world, than others; may be rewarded according to their works, by having better seats assigned them; that is, by being placed nearer to the throne of God, and the personal presence of Christ. We know, that it is a great privilege to be placed in one part of this world, rather than another; and it may be a greater privilege to be placed in a conspicuous part of

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heaven. As the principalities and powers in heavenly places may be seated above the patriarchs, the prophets, and apostles ; so these may be seated above common christians, who will be in the same manner locally distinguished and favoured, according to what they had done and suffered for the honour of Christ, before they were absent from the body and present with the Lord.

3. If departed saints will be put into the possession of such a variety of intellectual and spiritual enjoyments, as we have mentioned ; then it is easy to conceive how some may be much happier than others, though all will be perfectly blessed. Some will go to heaven with larger capacities than others ; some will go with larger measures of religious knowledge than others ; and some will go with larger measures of righteousness or true holiness than others. All these things are qualifications for the enjoyments of heaven, and render those who possess the largest portions of them, capable of enjoying the highest degrees of spiritual and divine felicity. The prophets and apostles, especially Paul and John, were far better prepared for the various enjoyments of heaven, than thousands of others, who never possessed their intellectual powers, religious knowledge, and eminent attainments in holiness. As some, if I may so speak, will enter forward in heaven, so many of them will keep forward to all eternity. Their previous qualifications will enable them to make more rapid advances in the intellectual and spiritual improvements and enjoyments. When they shall behold the face of God in righteousness, they will enjoy a nobler satisfaction in contemplating the glory of God, surveying the scenes and objects in heaven, and in giving and receiving mutual instruction. As one star differs from another star in glory, so one saint will differ from another saint, in respect to knowledge, holiness, and happiness, while there will not be

one discontented, or dissatisfied person in heaven. Such a *uniformity*, and yet *variety*, in heavenly felicity, will be absolutely necessary in order to raise the holiness and blessedness of God, of Christ, of angels, and of saints, to the highest possible degree of perfection.

4. If saints, as soon as they shine forth in the kingdom of their Father, shall be put into the possession of the rich variety of intellectual and spiritual enjoyments; then there is reason to believe, that their death will occasion more joy in heaven, than sorrow on earth. Since saints, at death, carry all their piety, virtue, and usefulness out of this world, so their decease is justly to be lamented. When David died, when Moses and Samuel died, when Rachel and Dorcas died, and when other pious persons left the world, their departure out of it justly occasioned sorrow and mourning, not only to their nearest connexions, but to all who knew their worth and importance in life. But since the pious dead carry all their virtues and excellencies into heaven, where they behold the face of God in righteousness, and take possession of all the holiness and felicity, which they are capable of enjoying, their entrance into the kingdom of glory must give joy to all the holy and benevolent beings there. They rejoiced when they were converted, and their joy must be increased, when they see them actually glorified. Benevolence in all intelligent beings disposes them to rejoice with those who rejoice. When saints have surmounted all their sorrows and sufferings, and safely arrived at the haven of eternal rest, they will certainly rejoice; and will not the benevolent spirits in heaven rejoice with them, especially their former christian friends, who had been waiting for their safe and happy arrival. If benevolence be the same in heaven, as on earth, the heavenly hosts will rejoice at the deaths of the godly, and if they do rejoice, they certainly will



rejoice more sensibly and sincerely, than surviving friends will mourn.

5. Since departed saints will behold the face of God in righteousness, we may form some clear and just conception of their beautiful appearance in the world of glory. Every amiable and distinguishing trait in their character will not only continue, but be vastly improved. Adam will be Adam there; Moses will be Moses there; Solomon will be Solomon there; Peter will be Peter there; Paul will be Paul there; and John the beloved disciple will be the beloved disciple there. Departed saints will carry with them all that variety of natural and moral excellencies, which they possessed in this life, and by which they were here known and distinguished. But though none of their intellectual powers and faculties will be essentially altered, yet they will all be brightened and adorned with the beauties of holiness. And this variety in the characters of the blessed, will beautifully display the wisdom and sovereignty, as well as the grace of God, in forming the vessels of mercy; and fill the mouth of each individual with peculiar arguments and motives of gratitude and praise. Each one will have something to thank God for, which is peculiar to himself; and so each will be perfectly satisfied with both his character and condition forever. Whatever pious survivors loved and admired in their departed christian friends, they may be assured they shall see, and love, and admire in them, when they shall happily meet them in the state of perfection.

6. If departed saints do immediately pass into glory, and become perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God; then their bereaved friends have no occasion to mourn on *their* account, but only on their *own*. The departed do not mourn for themselves, that they have safely reached the kingdom of glory, and behold the face of

God in righteousness ; and if they do not mourn for themselves, why should their surviving friends mourn for them ? And if they rejoice, why should not their bereaved friends rejoice with them ? Certainly, they should not mourn as those who have no hope ; or in other words, they should not mourn, that those, whom they loved and esteemed on earth, are put into a state of endless and growing perfection. But they have indeed just cause to mourn on their own account, and to mourn according to the loss they have sustained.

In this view, the *decease* of MRS. FARRINGTON, in the midst of her days and usefulness, is greatly to be lamented. It is not, perhaps, too much to say, that she nearly resembled the virtuous woman, whose character and conduct are drawn by the pen of inspiration. She merited the confidence of her husband, the affection of her children, and the respect of all her friends and acquaintance. She was agreeable to all, with whom she conversed, and conducted with propriety in every situation in which she was placed. She was called to move in a *conspicuous*, rather than *elevated* sphere of life, where she exhibited peculiar wisdom, prudence, patience, economy, and all the domestic virtues. She passed through many checkered and trying scenes, with that serenity, affability, cheerfulness, and fortitude, which are very rarely discovered in similar circumstances. How much this propriety of conduct was owing to her pious education, and early opportunities for mental improvement, it is not easy to determine ; but there is ground to believe it was partly owing to the special grace of God which she experienced in an earlier, or later period of life. Though in the first stages of her decline, she cherished high hopes and ardent desires of a recovery ; yet some time before her decease, she totally renounced all such hopes and such desires, and said, *she was willing to die*, and if

her heart did not deceive her, she was *prepared*, to leave the world. This is a source of consolation to her bereaved husband, and to her sorrowful children, under their great and irreparable loss. They have just reason to mourn, but not to complain. The Judge of all the earth has done right, and it becomes them to be still, and not open their mouths, because he has done it. Submission to God is the only balm, that can heal the wounds he has given them. He counted their tears, before he drew them from their eyes, and weighed their sorrows, before he pierced their hearts with anguish and distress. He meant to cast the cares and burdens of this young, numerous, and promising family upon the parent, who has publicly devoted them to Him, whom he has so long served in the gospel of his Son, and to increase his obligations to lead them in the ways of wisdom, and do every thing in his power to render them useful and happy through every period of their existence. He meant also to teach these motherless children to be dutiful to their afflicted father, and to be kind and tender-hearted to each other; and especially to teach the *elder* to instruct, and guide, and watch over the *younger*. If they cordially receive and follow these solemn admonitions of providence, they will hereafter have reason to say, that it has been good for them, that they have felt the chastising rod, and obeyed Him, who appointed it. Let them, therefore, neither despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when they are rebuked of him: and then he will give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

But is it nothing to us, my hearers, to behold and see this instance of mortality, and its distressing effects upon this circle of mourners? Certainly, we ought to mourn with them that mourn, and weep with them that weep,

and alleviate their sorrows, by our sympathetic tears. We are born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, and have yet to pass through the vale of tears to our long home. It deeply concerns us, to improve this call of providence, to prepare for the trials and close of life. We know not how soon it will be our lot to go before, or to follow our friends to the grave, the house appointed for all living. Let us cordially embrace the gospel, sincerely devote the residue of our lives to God, and set our souls and houses in order, that we may meet the king of terrors without dismay, and have a happy transition out of this, into the world of light where we may behold the face of God in righteousness, and be completely and forever satisfied with his likeness. AMEN.

M.



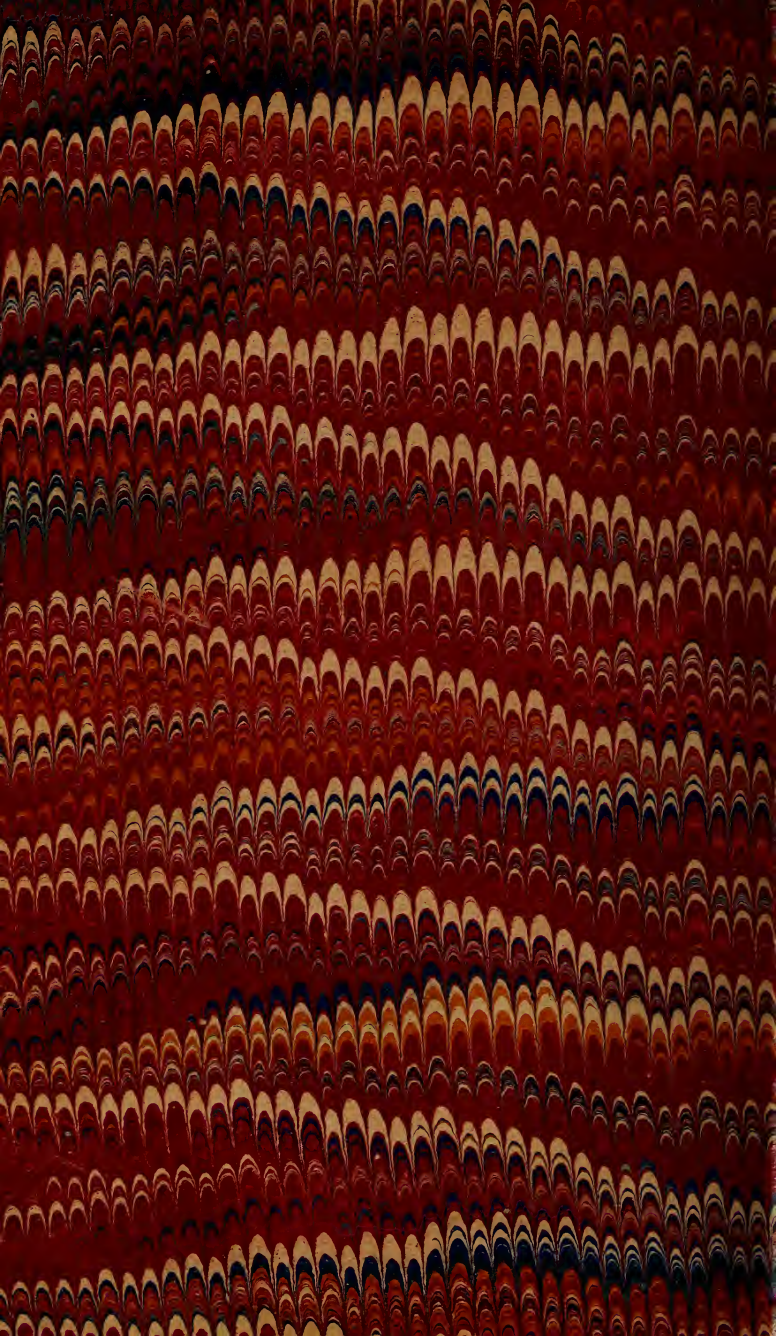


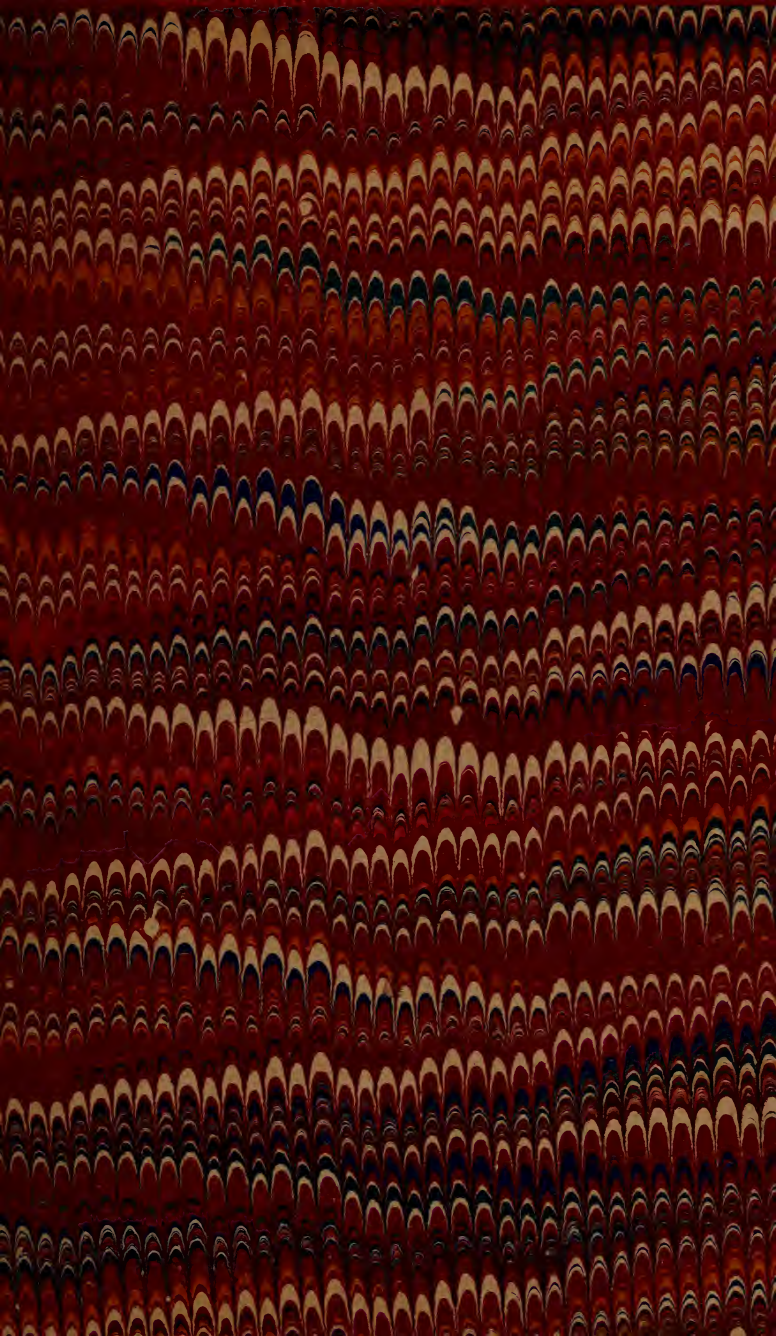












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